

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

At Endometriosis UK, we believe that everyone who is affected by endometriosis should have access to support, information and appropriate treatment. We believe no one should be discriminated against regardless of race, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, social class, religion and belief. We want to create an organisation where people are treated fairly, respected for who they are and able to access support and information that is meaningful to them.

Those living with endometriosis in the UK currently face delays in diagnosis time, with it taking an average of 8 years to diagnosis. Women and those assigned female at birth often face multiple repeat visits to primary, secondary and emergency care to gain appropriate treatment and care, and we hear often that they feel they have not been believed or taken seriously. Research into health inequalities in the UK shows that people from marginalised communities are more likely to experience poor healthcare; faced with assumptions and stereotypes about their race, cultural background, gender or sexual orientation that hinder their access to appropriate care and treatment.

We recognise that we need to do more to ensure that we are valuing the diversity of our staff, volunteers and community and that we are truly representing and supporting those who we serve. This commitment is organisation-wide.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy will highlight the ways in which we know we need to change, and detail our key priorities going forward over the next three years.

“We know that those from marginalised communities are more likely to experience poor healthcare and access to appropriate care and treatment. At Endometriosis UK we want to tackle these health inequalities and give a voice to all those with endometriosis. We want everyone to have access to appropriate treatment and the support that’s right for them. We are looking at how we work and how we can best improve what we do for all the endometriosis community. We know there is still more work to do. As we continue to listen and learn we are committed to centring marginalised voices to truly represent and support those who we serve.”

– From our CEO, Emma Cox

“This strategy sets out our plans to make sure we are supporting everyone affected by endometriosis, whatever their background or characteristics. That doesn’t always mean doing the same thing for everyone. We know that different people and communities have different needs, and the purpose behind this strategy is to show what we’re doing to better meet those needs and be an inclusive, supportive and welcoming organisation for everyone.”

– From our Board of Trustees

What have we done so far?

In 2020, we set up our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, a sub-committee of our board of trustees, specifically dedicated to oversee the development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion throughout the organisation. It was identified that we needed to understand more about the experience of different communities living with endometriosis, and so we carried out a research project to hear the views and experiences of specific communities including Black people, South Asian people, lesbians and women in same-sex relationships, and trans and non-binary people. This was conducted in partnership with a research agency and consisted of a series of Focus Groups, Surveys and One-to-One interviews. The findings were collated into a report, with clear recommendations for Endometriosis UK as a whole and specifically in relation to support for those communities. This report forms the basis of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (below), a series of achievable actions that will support Endometriosis UK to becoming a more inclusive organisation.

We have recruited a dedicated EDI Project Manager to develop, lead and implements projects that deliver Endometriosis UK’s EDI strategy. The post holder works across the organisation to proactively look for ways to develop, diversify and improve what we offer to meet the needs of those with endometriosis across our supportive services and volunteer network. We have developed new information production processes which include measures to ensure we meet the needs of all of those with endometriosis. This includes focusing on accessibility and health literacy. We consulted with communities to find out their health information needs. Language was considered a barrier and so we have developed two key information materials into seven languages to widen our reach to diverse communities.

We have also dedicated resources to ensuring that our social media and website are more representative of the communities we serve, and celebrate key calendar events that are marked by these communities. This is an area we will continue to promote and develop going forward to ensure all those with endometriosis feel a part of our organisation.

Our Priorities

Inclusive services and developing tailored support

Our research project work and feedback from the community shows that there is a real need for support that is specific to them, and especially in relation to the additional challenges often experienced by marginalised communities. We will ensure that our existing support services are inclusive, diverse and welcoming to all but will also look to establish means of support that specifically address the needs of different communities. Whether this is providing support materials in different formats and languages, or setting up specific support groups for the South Asian endometriosis community, we will act on the feedback we have received, and will continue to seek out, in order to ensure that our support offering is tailored to the true needs of all of our community.

Reflecting the communities we work with and for

We are proud of the work we have done to improve our social media and website to more fully reflect and represent the endometriosis community and commit going forward to always consider how we can include different communities and case studies to tell more diverse stories of endometriosis. We will ensure our campaigning work includes the voices of those who are under-represented and will talk to marginalised communities about issues which are directly affecting them. We will not be afraid to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes where we encounter them.

Developing Awareness and Knowledge

Our journey to being an inclusive organisation is an ongoing one. While we have clear objectives and actions we will achieve, it is also important to acknowledge that there are elements of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion landscape that are changing and evolving. Therefore, it's important that all staff, volunteers and trustees continue to learn via ongoing training and development opportunities.

We also have more to do to reach marginalised communities living with endometriosis and so there will be a commitment to partnership, consultation and research to ensure we are fully meeting our responsibilities to develop our understanding of the additional challenges these communities face.

We will also establish an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum which will be able to provide ongoing feedback and review on the work we will be doing. This forum will be made up of individuals from a variety of marginalised communities and will allow dedicated discussion around issues and challenges that are specific to them.

Data and Progress

We understand the importance of collecting data to monitor our progress and highlight areas for development. Each Head of Team will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of our values within their team and ensure that the mechanisms are in place to collect Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data. This data will be presented to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Board of Trustees.

When operationalising our work over the next three years we will focus on the following objectives:

Priorities	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Inclusive services and developing tailored support	<p>Create key Inclusion Statements, including LGBT+ Statement</p> <p>Review our support services offer and begin to offer specific tailored services</p> <p>Review our information and support materials offer and begin to offer specific tailored materials</p>	<p>Continue to offer specific tailored services</p> <p>Continue to produce information and support materials tailored to marginalised communities</p>	<p>Implement an Equality Analysis process</p>
Reflecting the communities we work with and for	<p>Establish our EDI Forum</p> <p>Continue to improve representation in external communications</p>	<p>Review of staff and volunteer recruitment processes</p> <p>Increase partnership working</p>	
Developing Awareness and Knowledge	<p>Carry out organisation-wide EDI training</p> <p>Carry out community engagement and consultation</p>	<p>Develop guidance for Healthcare Practitioners on talking about gender</p>	<p>Produce guidance on all EDI areas for Healthcare Professionals</p>
Data and Progress	<p>Establish monitoring processes for EDI data collection</p>		

How will we hold ourselves accountable

It is essential that we are held accountable on our commitment to creating a more equitable, diverse and inclusive Endometriosis UK. As well as implementing better EDI data collection processes and measuring our successes against our EDI Action Plan, we will ensure that we are accountable in the following ways:

- Communicate this strategy to staff, volunteers and stakeholders

- Report **quarterly** to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Board of Trustees
- Meet **regularly** with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum to hear feedback, concerns and suggestions
- Detail our development and achievements in our Annual Report and Accounts

Endometriosis UK's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is supported by the Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team, which ensures it will be embedded in the culture of the organisation. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a strategic priority and, and such, will be subject to regular review.

Definitions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Equality – is making sure everyone has the same opportunity to make the most of their lives. It is ensuring no one is discriminated against, or receives less opportunity, due to their background, where or when they were born or their beliefs. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination **on the basis of** protected characteristics.

The **characteristics** that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Diversity – is about the mix of different people who make up Endometriosis UK. It refers to the many different characteristics that individuals bring to a group or organisation. Being a diverse organisation means our people have a varied range of different backgrounds, beliefs and cultures and, therefore, different life experiences.

Inclusion – is about thinking and acting in a way that ensures everyone is considered when decisions are made. Our workplace and the services we provide should be places where everyone feels valued: where they can bring their different perspectives and be their whole selves whilst contributing their personal best.

Equity – is being fair and just in our approach. Being equitable recognises that we do not all start from the same position and looks at the adjustments that can be implemented to ensure fairness in opportunity and experience.

Endometriosis UK are committed to being open and transparent in the work we do. If you have a comment about our EDI work that you'd like to discuss, please email inclusion@endometriosis-uk.org and we will be happy to discuss with you further.